

Pakistan

A Brief Profile

Based on a total area of 796,096 square kilometres, lying between latitude 23°-42° and 36°-55° north & 60°-45° and 75°-20° east latitude, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan shares its western border with Iran and its eastern border with India; Afghanistan lies to the north and north-west while the Peoples' Republic of China stretches from the north to north-east alongside Gilgit & Baltistan. Pakistan comprises four provinces: Punjab, Sindh, North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Balochistan, and some federal units which include the Islamabad Capital Territory, Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA) and Northern Areas (FANA). Area-wise, Balochistan is the largest province with over 45 percent of the country's area while almost one-half of the country's population lives in the province of Punjab. Population density of the country is estimated at 166 persons per square kilometer. An overwhelming majority of population (96%) is Muslim. Agriculture is the single most important sector in the economy and over two-thirds of the total population resides in the rural areas.

Table 1: Area and Population in Pakistan

<i>Administrative Unit</i>	<i>Area (sq. km.)</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>% Population</i>	<i>Population Density (persons/sq.km)</i>
PAKISTAN	796096	132352279	100	166
Punjab	205345	73621290	55.6	358
Sindh	140914	30439893	23.0	216
NWFP	47521	17743645	13.4	238
Balochistan	374190	6565885	4.9	19
Islamabad	906	805235	0.6	889
FANA	27220	3176331	2.4	117

Source: Population Census (1998)

Administratively, Pakistan has a federal set-up. At the center is the Federal Government which comprises several ministries and divisions. Each ministry or division is headed by a Secretary who, in turn, is responsible to the federal minister. The ministers form the federal cabinet, headed by the Prime Minister. A similar pattern of administration exists at the provincial level. A large number of federal ministries have their counterparts in the provinces which are known as departments.

Under the new structure divisions have been abolished and district Governments have been established for district-based planning, management and administration. There are a total of 102 districts in Pakistan and 13 agencies of FATA. Districts are further divided into 380 talukas or tehsils (sub-districts).

Pakistan's Commitment to Education

Education is a fundamental human right. 12 years ago, the **Education for All** (EFA) movement, initiated by the Jomtien Declaration in 1990, proved a watershed as it accelerated the process of universalization of primary education in developing countries. However, the EFA 2000 Assessment demonstrated that although significant progress was achieved in many countries, but at the turn of the century, 113 million children had no access to primary education, 880 million adults were illiterate; gender discrimination continued to permeate education systems and the acquisition of human values and skills fell far short of the aspirations and needs of individuals and societies.

EFA 2000 Assessment for Pakistan showed positive developments over the decade: adult literacy rates from 28.5% to 45%; and although universal primary education could not be achieved but gross primary enrolment rates showed significant increase, especially for girls. However, primary learning achievement levels remained low and require better quality of education and training of teachers.

More recently, the World Education Forum, held in Dakar in April 2000, attended by 1000 representatives from over 164 countries, not only re-affirmed the Jomtien vision but also expanded the scope of EFA goals and elaborated the commitments and obligations of stake-holders. The six goals highlighted in the Dakar Framework for Action address: (i) the expansion and improvement of comprehensive early childhood care and education; (ii) access to, and complete free and compulsory, education to all children, particularly girls and disadvantaged groups; (iii) equitable access of all young people and adults to appropriate learning and life skills programmes; (iv) achievement of a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults; (v) elimination of gender disparities in primary and secondary education; and (vi) improvement in all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that

recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all. In addition, the Dakar Framework of Action also called upon the Governments to demonstrate their commitment for EFA through political will, resource mobilization and a process of participation involving a variety of stakeholders.

Based on its vision of “*Meeting the Learning Needs of All Through Quality Education*”, the Government of Pakistan is fully committed to the achievement of EFA goals and its response to the Dakar Framework has been very positive. Within the framework of the current National Education Policy (1998-2010), a comprehensive package of educational reforms with medium term targets, the Education Sector Reforms (ESR) Action Plan for 2001-2004 was developed through a consultative process. The main features of ESR’s reform agenda is a strategy for a holistic approach to education, including all areas of EFA and entailing legislative, administrative and financial actions at all levels.

The ESR also serves as a foundation of the National Plan of Action (NPA) for Education, developed as a long-term framework (2001-15) to achieve three EFA goals: (i) universal primary education; (ii) adult literacy; and (iii) early childhood care. Based on three five-year phases, the NPA relies on a set of strategies which include: (a) better access to education; (b) improvement in quality of education; (c) participation of communities; (d) link between basic education and skills development; (e) district-based planning and management for better governance; and (f) resource mobilization.

EDUCATION SECTOR IN PAKISTAN

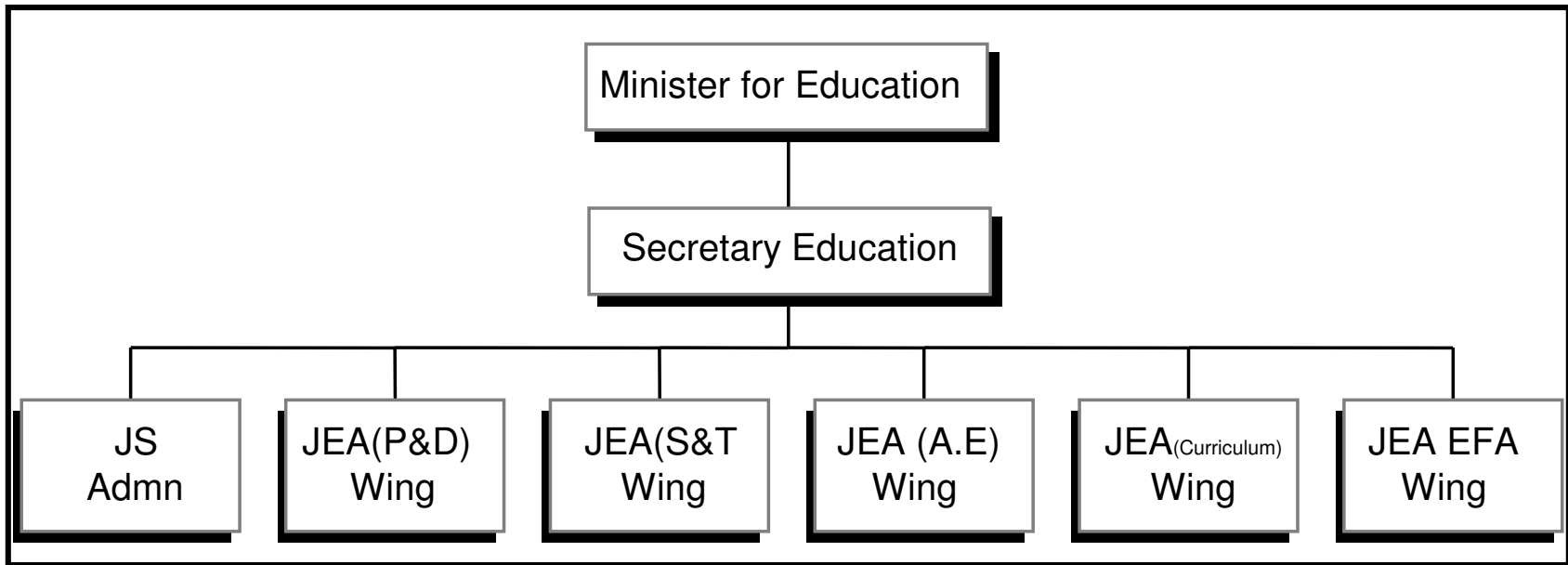
(a) Administration

Education in Pakistan is a provincial subject. However, the administration of public education in the country is partly centralized, with the Federal Ministry of Education responsible not only for the development of policy statements and national plans and budgets but also for the overall supervision of these policies and plans.

The policy, planning and coordination of major components of Education For All i.e. Non-formal Primary Education, Adult Literacy and Early Childhood Education is the responsibility of the EFA Wing of Ministry of Education, whereas the implementing agencies are the Provincial Education Departments, District Governments and NGOs. Learning achievement and training in essential skills (curricula, examination, evaluation, standard of education, learning/competency level, teacher training) are under

the purview of the Curriculum Wing of Ministry of Education and the provincial line departments/organizations. Special Education and Social Welfare Division manages the education for the handicapped and children with special needs.

Federal Education Department:



The provincial Education Departments are headed by their respective Provincial Education Ministers. The civil servant in charge of the department is the Provincial Education Secretary. The provinces are further divided into districts for the purpose of administration. The head of the Education Department in a district is Executive District Officer (EDO) Education and head of the Literacy Department (in case of Punjab and Sindh only) is Executive District Literacy (EDO Literacy). In the Provinces of NWFP and Balochistan, literacy is part of Education Department. The hierarchy then runs down to the District Education Officer, Sub-district Education Officer, Supervisors or Assistant Sub-district Education Officers.

At the grassroots level i.e. the union council level, Learning Coordinators (LCs) provide academic guidance as well as supervise the schools. The administrative structure has been decentralized under the Devolution Plan. Primary Education Directorates, Village Education Committees/School Management Committees have been set up in the provinces at grass root level.

Following is a brief outline of the various stages of elementary education, the process of designing its curricula, the nature of examinations and the opportunities available for teachers' training:

(b) Stages

Elementary Education in Pakistan has three stages. The first stage is called Pre-Primary or Early Childhood Education i.e. Katchi, kindergarten etc. The second stage is primary education. It comprises classes I to V. The third stage is a three-year middle stage i.e., classes VI to VIII.

Following are the age groups of Elementary Education in Pakistan:-

Pre-primary	3 > 5	For children of 3 years or more than 3 years and less than 5 years
Primary	5 > 10	For children of 5 years or more than 5 years but less than 10 years
Middle	10 > 13	For children of 10 years or more than 10 years but less than 13 years

(c) Curriculum

At the Federal level there exists a Curriculum Wing. In the provinces, Curriculum Bureaus and Text Book Boards exist as separate institutions whose activities are coordinated by the Federal Curriculum Wing. The existing curricula for classes I to V revised and introduced progressively since 1974. The curricula is developed and approved with active participation and statutory representation of all the provinces, and is not centralized. The provincial Text Book Boards have the responsibility to develop and produce the textbooks. A National Review Committee, represented by national and provincial experts, approves the script.

The medium of instruction at the Primary level is Urdu or provincial/local language. The courses offered are generally the same throughout Pakistan. Diversification of courses takes place after class VIII (age 13+). Textbooks are produced by the Provincial Text Book Boards. Recently system of open competition for textbooks has been introduced. The syllabi are

common to all the provinces and to that extent the curriculum is centralized. However, the provinces are free to interpret the outline of a course in view of the conditions existing in that province. The Text Book Boards develop books upto grade XII.

(d) Examinations

Examinations are generally held annually, and are the sole criterion to promote the students to higher classes or to retain them in the same class. However, recently a system of automatic promotion upto grade-III has been introduced in some schools. In the primary classes, examinations are conducted by the respective schools. However, at the end of the fifth year of the primary stage a public examination is held by the education department for promotion to the next grade. Another examination is held for the outstanding students to compete for the award of merit scholarships. Similarly, the examination in Middle Schools are held by the individual schools but there is a public examination at the end of grade VIII conducted by the Education Department for award of scholarships. Public examinations are also held by the respective regions at the end of classes X & XII.

(e) Teachers' Training

In Pakistan, there are 90 Colleges of Elementary Education which offer teachers' training programmes for Primary Teaching Certificate (PTC) and Certificate in Teaching (CT) to primary school teachers. For secondary school teachers, there are 16 Colleges of Education, offering graduate degrees in education and there are 9 university departments which train teachers at the master's level. There are only 4 institutions which offer in-service teachers' training. Besides these, the Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad, offers a very comprehensive teachers' training programme based on distance learning; its total enrolment is about 10,000 per annum of which 7,000 complete various courses every year.

Situation Analysis of Literacy and Education in Pakistan

Pakistan, during the past five decades, has achieved steady increases in economic growth and development levels but these failed to translate into any substantial progress in social indicators. Human resource development, particularly education, a key sector in

the social sphere, registered modest progress: adult literacy rates and gross enrollment rates at primary level remain low, with high drop-out rates. Key issues in education include wide discrepancies which exist across provinces, urban-rural locations and between genders. Quality of education, especially in the public institutions, remains poor with shortage of trained and motivated teachers, high degree of teacher absenteeism and lack of teaching materials. Management issues and bureaucratic inefficiencies lower effective utilization of scarce budgetary allocations.

Literacy rates in Pakistan continue to be low, with over one-half of adult population still illiterate. However, over the past two decades, improvements in literacy rates have been impressive, especially for females and that, too, in the rural areas. The overall national literacy rate was 44% in 1998 with wide variations across location, provinces and gender. The average literacy rate for urban areas was 63%, with 70% for males and 55% for females while the rural literacy rate was much lower at 34%, with 46% for males and 20% for females.

Table 2: Progress in Adult Literacy Rates

	Literacy rates (10+ years) (%)		
	URBAN	RURAL	TOTAL
1981	47.12	17.33	26.17
Male	55.32	26.24	35.05
Female	37.27	7.33	15.99
1998	63.08	33.64	43.92
Male	70.00	46.38	54.81
Female	55.16	20.09	32.02

Source: 1998 Census Report of Pakistan.

Limited provisions exist in the public sector for early childhood care and education and one-third of children attending “*katchi*” and Class 1 are admitted to the former section. In the urban private schools, however, there has been a mushroom growth of nursery schools and kindergartens. At the primary level, gross enrolment rates have always been higher in urban than rural areas. Also, these rates display sharp gender disparities within each area but due to higher levels of overall awareness, improvements in the socio-cultural attitudes towards girls’ education and certain policy measures which focused on female education, especially in rural areas under the Social Action Programme (SAP), the gender gap has somewhat narrowed during the 1990s. It may, however, be kept in mind that although wide variations exist in the statistics quoted for key education indicators across various government data sources, but there is unanimous agreement that the gender gap at the primary level is still well pronounced.

Table 3. Progress in Gross Enrolment Rates at Primary Level during 1990s

	URBAN	RURAL	TOTAL
1990			
Male	71.4	59.4	62.6
Female	63.2	23.2	33.9
Both	67.4	41.9	48.8
1998/99			
Male	92.0	89.0	90.0
Female	82.0	52.0	61.0
Both	87.0	71.0	76.0

*Pakistan School Statistics, 1990; Central Bureau of Education, Islamabad.
Pakistan School Education Statistics; AEPAM; 1998/99*

A major area of concern is the high drop-out rate from primary school. According to a national survey, although drop-out rates for boys have remained unchanged over the decade but drop-out rates for girls are reported to have decreased. Substantial decline was found in the percentage of girls (aged 10-18 years) who left school before completing primary school, in both urban (from 12% to 8%) as well as in rural areas (from 27% to 21%).

Table 4: Percentage of Boys and Girls (10-18 years) Dropping out Before Completing Primary School

	% Children (aged 10-18 years)		
	URBAN	RURAL	TOTAL
1990/91			
Male	14	17	16
Female	12	27	20
Both	13	20	17
1998/99			
Male	13	17	16
Female	8	21	15
Both	11	18	15

Source: Pakistan Integrated Household Survey (PIHS); 1991 and 1998/99

Note: According to EMIS data dropout rate from grade I – V is around 40 – 45%.

The above statistics represent a national profile. However, there are wide discrepancies in demographic and educational indicators across provinces and districts. For planners, these discrepancies play an important role as they highlight the inadequacies and gaps in the various regions of the country and if coupled with some projections for the future, these variations can prove invaluable in guiding policy for more effective planning and implementation of educational programmes.

The following sections of this report are based on national, provincial and district level information on population and its projections, number of schools, students' enrolment, number of teachers, gross and net participation rates, other social indicators and budgetary (federal and provincial) allocations and expenditures.